United Nations A/68/PV.104

General Assembly
Sixty-eighth session

Official Records

104th plenary meeting
Thursday, 17 July 2014, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ashe ..... (Antigua and Barbuda)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 63 (*continued*)

New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

(a) New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

Draft resolution (A/68/L.41/Rev.1)

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly considered, in a joint debate, agenda item 63 and its sub-items (a) and (b) and agenda item 13, at its 36th and 37th plenary meetings, on 25 October 2013.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia to introduce draft resolution A/68/L.41/Rev.1.

Ms. Vilaseca Chumacero (Plurinational State of Bolivia): I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, a draft resolution entitled "New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support", contained in document A/68/L.41/Rev.1, under agenda item 63 (a). The Group of 77 and China would like to express its appreciation to all delegations for their constructive deliberations on and contributions to the draft resolution.

The draft resolution presented today reaffirms the support of the international community for the implementation of the African Union's New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and recognizes the progress in its implementation. It also welcomes the commitment of African leaders to Africa's political, social and economic integration agenda and to the ideal of pan-Africanism and African renaissance, as reaffirmed in the solemn declaration adopted in May 2013 on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization of African Unity/African Union. The draft resolution also welcomes the progress made in the development of the African Union Agenda 2063 as a strategic vision and action plan for ensuring a positive socioeconomic transformation in Africa within the next 50 years, particularly through regional integration, industrialization, diversification of the economy and job creation.

With regard to the topic of governance, the draft resolution welcomes the commendable progress that has been achieved in implementing the African Peer Review Mechanism, in particular the completion of the peer review process in 17 countries, and welcomes the progress in implementing the national programmes of action resulting from those reviews. The draft resolution also recognizes and welcomes the sustained efforts of African countries in mainstreaming a gender perspective and the empowerment of women in the implementation of the New Partnership.

The progress made thus far by Africa must continued to be supported by developed countries. In that regard, the draft resolution expresses concern at Africa's disproportionately low share in the volume of

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international trade, which stands at approximately 3 per cent, also expresses concern that official development assistance to Africa fell in 2013, and further expresses concern at the increased debt burden of some African countries. In that context, the draft resolution presented today calls for the fulfilment of the official development assistance (ODA) commitments, including the commitments to allocate 0.7 per cent of gross national product to ODA.

Finally, Africa's efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, create jobs and ensure sustainable development must be completed by sustained support from developed partners. In that vein, the draft resolution urged the international community to give due attention to the priorities identified in the context of NEPAD in the formulation of the post-2015 development agenda.

The President: I call on the representative of Kenya to make an oral revision to draft resolution A/68/L.41/Rev.1.

Mr. Ogweno (Kenya): At the outset, I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting on the adoption of a very important draft resolution on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Similarly, I thank you for giving me the opportunity, in my capacity as the facilitator of the draft resolution, to deliver this statement.

The core mandate of NEPAD is to facilitate and coordinate the implementation of regional and continental priority programmes and projects and to push for partnerships, resource mobilization, research and knowledge management. It is a mandate that all African States take very seriously and for which they seek the support of all development partners towards its full realization. Accordingly, the NEPAD resolution has always been negotiated and adopted by the General Assembly by consensus.

I am pleased that the same procedure has been followed in that regard today. As facilitator of the draft resolution, I take this opportunity to thank all delegations for their constructiveness and flexibility during the entire negotiating process. I am particularly grateful to all participants for providing me with the delicate compromise reached in elaborating the draft resolution.

Turning to paragraph 39 of draft resolution A/68/L.41/Rev.1, I wish to state that it has been the most difficult paragraph to resolve. Irrespective of the fact that it contains agreed language that was borrowed in its entirety from previous and current trade resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, it has brought into sharp focus some issues currently being deliberated in Geneva in the context of World Trade Organization negotiations.

For close to a month, a compromise on the paragraph seemed almost elusive. We eventually reached the conclusion that paragraph 39 must neither divide us nor scuttle our collective efforts, since our core focus remains the full and effective support of the implementation of NEPAD programmes and projects. Consequently, I wish to make an oral revision to paragraph 39 to have it end after the word "negotiations" and to delete the subsequent wording. The revised version of paragraph 39 would therefore read:

> "Notes the progress made at the Ninth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, held in Bali, Indonesia, from 3 to 7 December 2013, and looks forward to the timely implementation of the 'Bali package', including the trade facilitation agreement, and calls for a balanced, ambitious, comprehensive and development-oriented outcome of the Doha Development Agenda multilateral trade negotiations".

I wish to state that the revised paragraph 39, as I have read it out, is agreed language in the context of previous General Assembly resolutions on this item, but because we sought consensus agreement, we requested the oral revision that I have just proposed.

I also wish to clarify that this is the agreed win-win solution for all. In that connection, I would add that the consensus on paragraph 39 was reached on the understanding that the paragraph, as it stands with the oral revision I have just read out, shall not be used to prejudice either future negotiations in the context of the World Trade Organization or resolutions on trade issues negotiated and adopted by the General Assembly. In other words, the amendment is NEPAD-specific and does not set a precedent for resolutions addressing future agreements.

In conclusion, I wish to share with the Assembly a Swahili proverb of wisdom, which says that it is useless for me to recognize a person who does not recognize me. I thank all delegations for recognizing each other's red lines and for adjusting accordingly, particularly on paragraph 39. I also thank all for the trust bestowed on me as facilitator of the draft resolution and for the

support rendered for its successful conclusion and adoption.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/68/L.41/Rev.1, entitled "New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support", as orally revised.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors of A/68/L.41/Rev.1: Austria, Estonia, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia and Turkey.

The President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/68/L.41/Rev.1, as orally revised?

Draft resolution A/68/L.41/Rev.1, as orally revised, was adopted (resolution 68/301).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 63 and agenda item 63 as a whole?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 115 (*continued*)

Election to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections

(e) Election of the Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

Note by the Secretary-General (A/68/915)

The President: Members will recall that, by its decision 64/428, of 25 August 2010, the General Assembly, on the proposal of the Secretary-General, elected Mr. Joan Clos (Spain) as Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme for a term of office of four years, beginning 18 October 2010 and ending on 17 October 2014.

In accordance with resolution 56/206 of 21 December 2001, the Secretary-General nominates Mr. Clos for re-election by the Assembly as Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme for a term of office beginning on 18 October 2014 and ending on 31 December 2017.

Accordingly, may I take it that the General Assembly wishes to re-elect Mr. Joan Clos as Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme for a term of office beginning on 18 October 2014 and ending on 31 December 2017?

It was so decided.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Libya.

Mr. Dabbashi (Libya): I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the Group of African States. At the outset, the Group thanks you, Mr. President, for convening this important debate in order to take action on the important agenda item before us.

The Group reaffirms its continuing support to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT). In that regard, the Group takes note of the appointment of Mr. Joan Clos for a second term as Executive Director of the Programme. The Group also reiterates the important mandate vested in the Programme and the need for it to fully and effectively implement the mandate. The mandate will be increasingly relevant in the future given the ever-growing global population and the challenges it will create in both rural and urban areas around the world.

In that regard, the Group remains keen to strengthen the Programme in the context of the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, to be convened in 2016. This is critically important for all Member States given that urbanization has become a global priority with benefits and challenges alike. The Programme will therefore have to be strengthened if it is to help Member States respond sufficiently to the challenges of human settlements and urbanization in the twenty-first century.

Because of this, and mindful of some advantages that could be derived from the exercise of this mandate, the Group has therefore decided to accept the reappointment of the current Executive Director. However, this does not mean that we are fully satisfied with the current performance and governance of the entity. We have serious concerns and wish to point them out for consideration and so that appropriate solutions can be found as a matter of urgency.

The first concern regards the expansion of UN-HABITAT's programmatic footprint. The Group

notes with deep concern the shrinking programmatic footprint of UN-HABITAT. We say this because some programmes supported until now by UN-HABITAT in African countries have been discontinued under the current management. This is clearly unacceptable as the relevance of the programmatic activities of the Programme are mainly in the developing world, where the challenges of human settlement and urbanization continue to increase.

In a similar vein, we are concerned with the opening and/or the relocation of some UN-HABITAT offices, in particular to European cities. While we may not challenge the intention of such moves, as UN-HABITAT was created to help with capacity-building in all States, the Group disagrees with the unilateral approach adopted by the management in that regard.

We say this because the relocation and/or opening of new offices have programme budget implications that impinge on day-to-day management, governance and the utilization of available financial resources. Needless to say, such initiatives should never be undertaken in a manner that undermines the core headquarters functions of the Programme in Nairobi. We therefore reiterate that such weighty decisions pertaining to governance arrangements of the Programme must be taken only in full consultation with and with the endorsement of all Member States.

The second concern centres on the Group's disappointment with the current handling of human resources development and personnel at UN-HABITAT. While we acknowledge that the Programme has experienced some financial challenges in the recent past, we are nevertheless not in favour of certain measures that have been or are being taken to keep it in a good financial state. The Group disapproves in particular of the retrenchment initiatives targeting personnel mainly from developing countries, as well as the lack of promotion and/or sidelining in key positions at the Programme.

In that regard, we emphasize the need to strike a balance between North and South, especially regarding the recruitment and/or promotion of staff to positions that influence key policy issues and decision-making at the Programme. Resolving that important issue in a professional and politically acceptable manner is very important if UN-Habitat is to effectively respond to the settlement challenges facing the developing world.

The third concern regards mobilization of adequate and predictable financial resources for the effective running of the Programme. We know that the allocation of financial resources from the United Nations regular budget is hardly enough for the full and effective operational and programmatic activities of the Programme. That is why extrabudgetary resources have continued to play a very important role.

We are, however, concerned that the current mobilization of financial resources from sources other than the United Nations regular budget has dropped significantly in the past couple of years. We note with concern that the convening of the most recent session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat was made possible only courtesy of the support of one of our own African countries. While the Group appreciates the generous support of our brotherly State in that regard, we are concerned that the failure of management to mobilize financial resources from traditional partners and other stakeholders does not augur well for the future of the Programme. We therefore encourage the Executive Director to continue reaching out to traditional partners for resource mobilization.

Finally, the Group reiterates its commitment to the Programme and will continue to do everything possible to ensure that it fully executes its mandate. The African Group also stresses that the issues it has raised must be addressed effectively and as a matter of urgency. We shall therefore continue to follow up on the progress made in that regard and hope that the Executive Director, following his appointment, will effectively address those concerns.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (e) of agenda item 115?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 116 (*continued*)

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(j) Appointment of members and alternate members of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee

Note by the Secretary-General (A/68/940)

The President: Members will recall that the Assembly decided to include this sub-item in the agenda of the current session at its resumed ninety-ninth plenary meeting, on 3 July 2014. Members will

also recall that, at that same meeting, the Assembly, taking into account that the Fifth Committee had concluded its work for the resumed part of the session, and without setting a precedent, decided to consider the sub-item directly in the plenary meeting.

As indicated in document A/68/940, the Secretary-General has received notification of the resignation of Mr. Gerhard Kuntzle of Germany from the United Nations Staff Pension Committee, effective 16 June 2014. The Assembly will therefore be required to appoint at this current session a person to fill the vacancy for the remaining period of the term of office of Mr. Kuntzle, which expires on 31 December 2016. It is also indicated in that document that the Government of Germany has nominated Mr. Jörg Stosberg to fill the vacancy arising from the resignation of Mr. Kuntzle. The Secretariat was informed by the Chair of the Group of Western European and Other States that the candidature of Mr. Stosberg has been endorsed by that Group.

May I therefore take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to appoint Mr. Jörg Stosberg as a member of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee for a term of office beginning on 17 July 2014 and ending on 31 December 2016?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (j) of agenda item 116?

It was so decided.

Programme of work

The President: I should like to inform members that consideration of draft resolution A/68/L.54, entitled "Modalities for the overall overview by the General Assembly of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society," submitted under agenda item 16, entitled "Information and communications technologies for development," is postponed to a later date to be announced. The document will be reissued for technical reasons.

The meeting rose at 3.35 p.m.